

Advance notice

Tuesday, June 26, 2012 2:07 AM EDT

To the editor:

Last year I wrote to Superintendent of Germantown Central School District Patrick Gabriel about the practice, of the Germantown Central School District, of sending notices of the school elections so close to the actual election date that there is not enough time for those who need absentee ballots to be able to get them. It takes a minimum of 4-8 business days request, and to receive and to return by mail an application for an absentee ballot. It takes another 2 – 3 business days for the school district office to process the application and return the actual ballot in time for the election. Earlier this year I raised this problem publicly at a meeting of the Gallatin Residents Association, and you promised to correct this practice so that notices of school related elections would be received in a timely manner.

Nothing has changed. I received the Germantown Central School 2012-2013 Budget Newsletter in my mailbox on the afternoon of Saturday, June 16, 2012, notifying me that “Absentee Ballots may be obtained for the proposition vote.” Clearly, since the actual vote takes place on Tuesday, June 19th, just two business days after the newsletter arrived, such absentee ballots can not be obtained by anyone who can not go directly to the School District office on Monday, the day preceding the election.

While I do understand that a public notice in a newspaper of record, provides all of the legal notice required by law, not all residents have easy access to such notices, especially those who are only in the township part of the week. The district’s newsletter, if it were sent in a timely fashion, would provide adequate notice to all of those residents and taxpayers who support your schools. As Superintendent you represent us. I ask again: please adjust your district’s practices to eliminate this effective disenfranchisement of some of those you represent by sending timely – i.e. by mailing at least eight business days in advance - notices of school district elections.

Richard Trachtman, Ph.D.

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